

IN THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-12 (canceled).

13. (New) A method for responding to a query for a computer network address corresponding to a request name, said method comprising:

- (a) searching a database for a network address corresponding to the request name;
- (b) if the search locates a network address corresponding to the request name, responding to the query with the network address in the database corresponding to the request name;
- (c) if the search does not locate a network address corresponding to the request name, initiating a process that (i) tests the query for information about the nature of the address being sought, and (ii) responds to the request with a referral response identifying an alternate network address selected in accordance with the results of the tests.

14. (New) The method of claim 13 where the referral response identifies a network address for a web site that assists the user in identifying a desired address.

15. (New) The method of claim 14 where the referral response identifies a network address for a web site that prompts the user for different spellings of the request name.

16. (New) The method of claim 13 where the referral response identifies a network address for a web site that offers a service to the user.

17. (New) The method of claim 16 where the referral response identifies a network address for a web site that prompts the user to purchase a domain name.

18. (New) The method of claim 13 wherein steps (a) and (b) are performed on a first server, and the referral response of step (c) is generated on a second server distinct from the first server.

19. (New) A system for responding to a query from a user for a computer network address corresponding to a request name, said system comprising:

- (a) a database that associates names with corresponding network addresses; and
- (b) a first server executing a first process that searches the database for the request name such that,

- (i) when the search locates a network address corresponding to the request name, the first application responds to the query with the network address in the database corresponding to the request name, and

- (ii) when the search does not locate a network address corresponding to the request name, a second process is initiated;

wherein the second process tests the query and generates a referral response identifying an alternative network address selected in accordance with the results of the test.

20. (New) The system of claim 19 where the referral response identifies a network address for a web site that assists the user in identifying a desired address.

21. (New) The system of claim 20 where the referral response identifies a network address for a web site that prompts a user for different spellings of the request name.

22. (New) The system of claim 19 where the referral response identifies a network address for a web site that offers a service to the user.

23. (New) The system of claim 19 wherein a second server performs the second process.